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C O N F I D E N T I A L   SOFIA 001675

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [BG](#) [IZ](#) [LY](#)

SUBJECT: BULGARIA PUSHING TO RESOLVE IRAQ & SHARED BASES  
FOR BUSH-PURVANOV MEETING

Classified By: Amb. John Beyrle for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. Foreign Minister Kalfin told Amb. Beyrle September 28 that Bulgaria intends to have selected a follow-on mission in Iraq prior to the October 17 Bush-Purvanov meeting in Washington. He said that Bulgaria wishes to focus on the draft Defense Cooperation Agreement during next week's negotiations with Amb. Loftis in Sofia. Kalfin also previewed President Purvanov's agenda for his meeting with President Bush and updated us on his planned meeting with Qadhafi's son next week in Paris to discuss the Bulgarian medics. End Summary.

#### FOLLOW-ON MISSION IN IRAQ

2. (C) Following up on the Iraq Contact Team visit to Sofia last week, Kalfin reiterated Bulgaria's intention to remain involved in Iraq, but noted, "it should be in a form that can get political support," stressing "we cannot continue the current type of mission." He recognizes the value to Iraq's stability of having the Bulgarian contingent remain through the October referendum and the December elections. He was disappointed that the MOD did not ask more questions about the mission at Camp Ashraf during talks last week, but indicated that training Iraqi security forces headquarters units is "a good option." Kalfin said that the GOB is also considering other options, like medical and engineering units, that were not part of the U.S. contact team's briefing.

3. (C) Kalfin explained that the Bulgarian interagency group that participated in last week's discussions would send a report to the Council of Ministers by September 30 with recommended options. Reiterating a deadline that President Purvanov had described earlier to the Ambassador, he said, "We want to have a decision made" prior to the Bush-Purvanov meeting. Kalfin said he would like to get political backing for a follow-on mission from the Parliament through either a resolution or a committee decision.

#### JOINT MILITARY FACILITIES

4. (C) Kalfin told Ambassador that the MFA will take the lead in next week's negotiations on joint military facilities, and Lubomir Ivanov, Bulgaria's ambassador to NATO, will lead the Bulgarian delegation. This is a change from the previous negotiating session, which was led by former Deputy Minister of Defense Ilko Dimitrov. Kalfin suggested that negotiations focus on the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) instead of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). (Note: The MFA has since agreed to focus on the SOFA as planned). Kalfin agreed with Ambassador's suggestions to hold a joint Loftis-Ivanov press conference in Sofia and have Ambassador Loftis brief senior members of the Parliament's foreign affairs and defense committees. Ambassador and Kalfin agreed that these outreach efforts could help counteract misinformation that has recently appeared in the Bulgarian press.

#### PURVANOV'S WHITE HOUSE VISIT

5. (C) Kalfin said that Purvanov's agenda for his meeting with President Bush will include: Iraq, joint military facilities, trade and investment, the double taxation treaty, the Bulgarian medics in Libya, and the visa waiver program. Kalfin promised to coordinate in advance with Post on the Bush-Purvanov agenda.

#### BULGARIAN MEDICS IN LIBYA

6. (C) Kalfin thanked Ambassador for U.S. assistance and stressed the strength of U.S. influence with Libya. Ambassador assured Kalfin that the U.S. is ready to help push any agreement with Libya, but stressed that Bulgaria and Libya must work out the details in advance through bilateral discussions. Ambassador informed Kalfin that Secretary of State Rice would not be visiting Libya as had been erroneously reported here. Kalfin said that he plans to meet Qadhafi's son in Paris next week to "finalize communication channels with Libya" and then make a proposal based, in part, on USG recommendations. Minister Kalfin said that he would keep Post fully informed.

COMMENT

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17. (C) Kalvin understands the importance of Bulgaria's follow-on mission and the deadline for decision imposed by the White House visit. His comments indicate a preference for a training mission, even if it puts Bulgarian soldiers at greater risk. We will continue to try and provide additional information to the Bulgarians regarding follow-on missions as requested.

BEYRLE